

File Code: 1950
Date: September 7, 2016

Robert Klavins
Northeast Oregon Field Coordinator
Oregon Wild
PO Box 48
Enterprise, OR 97828

Dear Mr. Klavins:

Thank you for sharing your thoughts regarding the Lostine and Lower Joseph Creek projects, and on collaboration. I would like to address the topic of collaboration first and then address the 3 requests that you included at the end of your August 23, 2016 letter.

Collaboration

First, I would like to recognize the time you and others have spent participating in the Wallowa-Whitman Forest Collaborative (WWFC). I fully understand the time commitment and am very supportive of the work of the WWFC. The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has been deeply involved in hosting and attending the meetings, providing logistics and support for field visits, providing technical support and information on science reviews that apply to topics of interest for the WWFC and that may apply to aspects of specific projects, and hosting learning opportunities for team members regarding the National Forest planning processes.

I am also very supportive of collaboration in a broader context on the Forest, though with the understanding that not all of the many projects we conduct on the Forest should be reviewed by the WWFC, in part due to sheer capacity limitations of the collaborative team. There are numerous other collaborative efforts occurring across the Forest in support of smaller projects. It is appropriate that we apply this flexibility to collaboration, recognizing that it applies in many contexts and can include a broad array of formal to informal activities depending on the complexity and size of projects. For a smaller-scale project like Lostine it is appropriate that the collaborative process is smaller-scale, while for a large-scale and complex project like Lower Joseph Creek EIS it is appropriate that the collaborative process is larger and more formal.

I believe that collaboration works well when the parties are motivated to participate because they feel the process will provide an outcome that is better than if they did not participate. However, if a party does not support the premise of a project, or feels they can achieve their goals through unilateral action, they may not support collaborative efforts.

You have told me you do not support the use of the 2014 Farm Bill CE, the authority under which the Lostine project is being analyzed and documented. I understand this sentiment could influence your view of the merits of the Lostine project or the planning process. This authority



has been granted by Congress to help facilitate projects like the Lostine Project in a timely and efficient manner.

OR Wild's Requests

Instruct your staff to issue a correction of the public misrepresentation of our involvement in the Lostine Corridor project. Going forward, either meaningfully engage the Wallowa-Whitman Collaborative on the project or stop calling it a collaborative.

I understand that you feel the July 18 News Release which provided an update on the Lostine project, misrepresents OR Wild's involvement in the project. I reviewed the news release closely and found the following statement: "*The Forest Service has also met with the Nez Perce Tribe Fisheries division, the timber industry, environmental groups, US Fish and Wildlife and NOAA Fisheries.*" I discussed this with the local District and understand that they have records of meeting with members of the environmental group HCPC, and feel this statement is accurate. I did not find any reference in the News Release of OR Wild.

I also understand that you feel OR Wild has not been consulted on the Lostine Project. I found that the District has included OR Wild on all of their outreaches, notices, and invitations to participate. They also have a record of a comment from OR Wild (D.Heiken, March 10, 2016) provided in response to scoping. The District also shared that they reached out to OR Wild toward the end of the scoping period to see if your organization would like to submit a comment since they had not yet received any input from OR Wild.

I appreciate the input your organization has provided, but based on these records I feel the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has not knowingly misrepresented OR Wild's involvement in the project. I also feel the smaller-scale collaborative process that the District is using for the Lostine Project is appropriate. It would be a disservice for the Forest and local communities if we required *all* of our many projects to go through the WWFC for collaboration.

Re-consider those portions of your draft decision on Lower Joseph that violate the "consensus document" to which you frequently refer.

I recognize the hard work you and other members of the WWFC did in seeking to find areas of agreement. I do realize that the WWFC was not able to reach consensus but did identify agreements on some issue and these are articulated in a consensus document that was provided to me. While I understand the document was not completed, I still value this effort and input, and used it to inform my draft decision on Lower Joseph Creek. However, it's important to understand the boundaries of collaborative influence and that the Forest Service must retain decision-making authority, including in the formulation of the draft Record of Decision. My responsibility is to make a sound

decision based on numerous factors, including those beyond the input of the collaborative or votes cast in support of particular activities.

I have considered and re-considered these many factors, including the draft consensus document developed by the WWFC. I hear your frustration that certain activities proposed by OR Wild were not broadly supported in the draft consensus document, and I think this would be an appropriate topic for you to discuss with your WWFC team mates. It may also be valuable to discuss the broader topic of collaboration in terms of the guiding principles that you and others have agreed to in helping to facilitate this dialog.

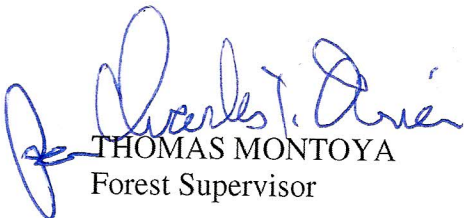
Ensure your staff – especially the Wallowa Valley, Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, and Eagle Cap Ranger District – better understand what meaningful collaboration is and what it is not so we can have more constructive conversations and greater success in the future.

While I believe we are all continuing to learn about collaboration, I know that my employees support collaborative efforts for its benefits in building better decisions and building relationships. In fact, the employees on the Wallowa Mountains Zone have taken a bold and creative lead in trying new approaches to collaborate and fully involve the community in our activities through the *Charter Ranger District* concept. Part of this effort has been to stand up a Recreation Foundation staffed by interested and affected community members, with the intent of working closely with the Forest to identify recreation issues, develop solutions, and prioritize projects. I understand that you have attended one of these meetings and appreciate your support.

I do agree we can all continue to learn more about collaboration, and based on the efforts and successes the Wallowa Mountains Zone has in incorporating local values and building strong relationships in Wallowa County, I am confident in their ability to collaborate.

Thank you for your interest and efforts in support of working collaboratively. I look forward to continuing these discussions through future projects.

Sincerely,



THOMAS MONTOYA
Forest Supervisor

cc: Senator Wyden - Kathleen Cathey